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ABSTRACT

This booklet sketches the life, educational theories, and accomplishments of Albert F. Ames (1888-1931). Ames was trained as a mathematician, and served six years as a mathematics teacher in Canada before becoming superintendent of schools in Riverside, Illinois. He co-authored five mathematics textbooks with J. A. McLellan. These texts, revolutionary in their time, were based on theories developed by Dewey and McLellan and shared by Ames. (SD)

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A. F. AMES

VILLAGE SCHOOLMASTER

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A MEMOIR

by Edward C. Ames

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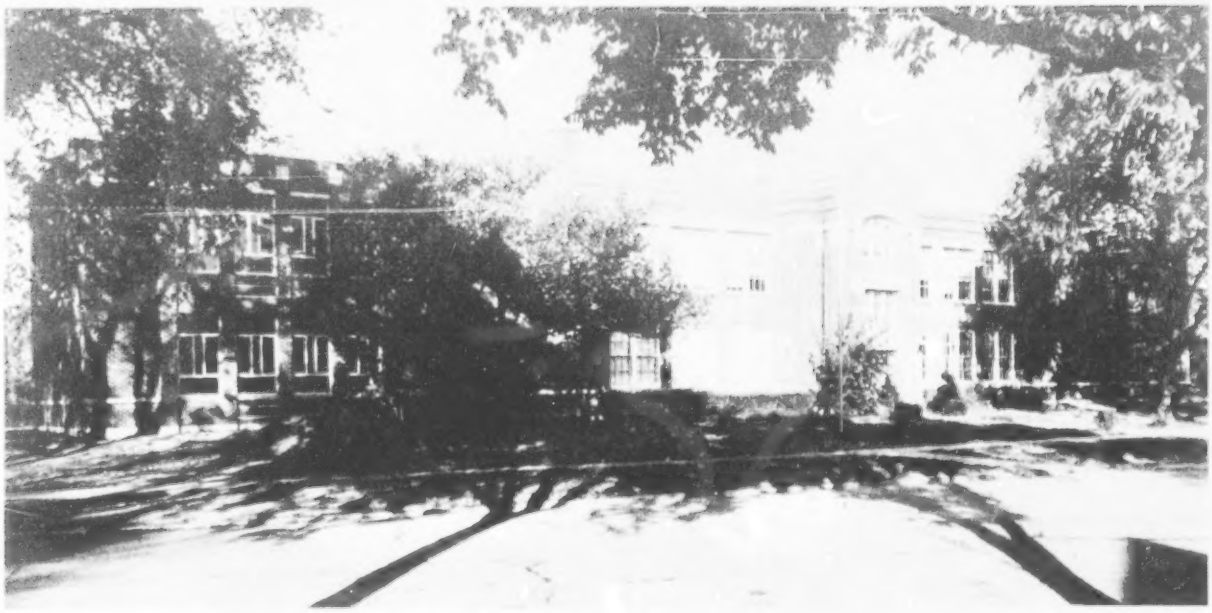


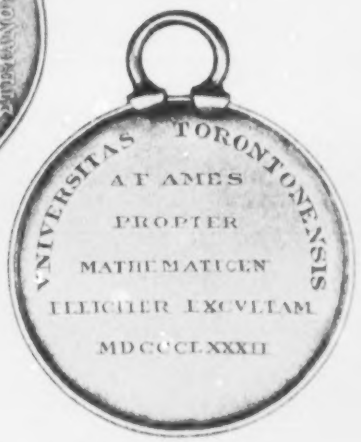
A. F. Ames School
Southcote and Nuttall Streets in Riverside

A. F. Ames at his desk in Riverside's Central School.
This photograph was taken in the late 1920's.

A. F. AMES

VILLAGE SCHOOLMASTER

Teacher...Administrator...Scholar
Mathematician...Textbook Author



A MEMOIR
by Edward C. Ames

ABOUT THE MAN...

Who served continuously for 43 years (1888-1931) as Superintendent of Schools in the Chicago suburb of Riverside, Illinois . . .

Who was known among his peers as an innovator . . .

Who was joint author of five widely used arithmetic textbooks published at the turn of the century . . .

Who helped apply the philosophy of Educator John Dewey by transforming arithmetic from an exercise taught by rote into a subject made meaningful in terms of the pupil's age and experience.

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FOREWORD

Of the nineteen surviving grandchildren of Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Ames, only Harriet Carlson Kweton (Mrs. Elmer Kweton) still lives in Riverside. Her mother, Harriet Ames Carlson (Mrs. Arthur E. Carlson), who lives in Brookfield just west of Riverside, is the only one of the seven Ames children still residing in the area.

Mrs. Kweton was a member of the Riverside District Board of Education from 1961 to 1967. Later she was elected a member of the board of directors of the Riverside Public Library. In 1974 she became chairman of the Riverside Historical Commission appointed to organize and preserve a record of Riverside's first hundred years. Among other activities, the Commission established the Riverside Historical Museum housed in Riverside's landmark Water Tower.

One of the Village's centennial events in 1975 concerned the history of the Riverside schools. While this was in preparation Mrs. Kweton said to me:

"Uncle Edward, what was Grandpa Ames' philosophy of education?"

Although the contribution of the schools to Riverside's development was observed appropriately in 1975, her question went unanswered. This Memoir is a belated effort to set down a brief biographical account and to sketch the educational philosophy and achievements of the man who was the Village Schoolmaster for 43 years, as well as a teacher, scholar, administrator, textbook author, mathematician, and family man.

I am the youngest of the seven Ames children who grew up in Riverside. The arithmetic textbooks of which my father was joint author were published before I was born in 1906. But I have been intrigued by my niece's question. This Memoir is an attempt to supply a documented answer as objectively as possible, so that it may stand scrutiny as an account generated by an interest that goes beyond filial devotion. This concern applies especially to the part dealing with the McLellan-Ames arithmetic textbooks published by Macmillan between 1897 and 1902.

Edward C. Ames

Toledo, Ohio
November 1976

A. F. Ames served continuously for 43 years as superintendent of schools in "The Village in a Park" -- the Chicago suburb of Riverside, Illinois. This is still probably an unbroken record of continuous service as a superintendent in the same location in any Illinois district.

He came to Riverside as a young man of 27. He died in the harness at 70. As a token of the esteem in which he was held, the Village Council ordered the flag on the village green flown at half staff every day for one month following his death on May 19, 1931.

Mr. Ames was more than a school superintendent. He was the village schoolmaster for generations of Riverside pupils. In addition he was a teacher, as well as a recruiter and trainer of teachers. He guided the growth and development of Riverside's District 96 from a small system serving a community of approximately one thousand to a suburban system serving a population of nearly seven thousand.

His specialty was mathematics -- the academic discipline in which he had won silver medalist honors at the University of Toronto. With Dr. James A. McLellan, a widely known Canadian educator, he was joint author of five arithmetic textbooks published by the Macmillan Company between 1897 and 1902.

During his 43 years as superintendent, he often expressed his appreciation of the high quality of citizenship and continuing commitment to superior educational opportunity reflected in the leadership of the elected members of the Riverside Board of Education who set the policies that he administered.

Albert Flintoft Ames was born in Sarnia, Ontario, Canada, on April 23, 1861. He was the son of the Reverend William Ames, a minister of the Methodist Church of Canada, and of Hephzibah Whitehouse Ames. He was the fourth of their six children.

Albert grew up in several different locations in Ontario because his father, being a Methodist minister, was reassigned every two or three years from one church to another. He attended the University of Toronto from 1878 to 1882. At age 21 he received a bachelor of arts degree with honors.

After graduation from the University of Toronto he taught at the Collegiate Institute in St. Thomas, Ontario, where he was the mathematics master for six years. Among his students was a teen-ager, a native of Hawtry, Ontario, who had attended Pickering College in Pickering, Ontario. Her name: Daisy Belle Carder. He upbraided her for putting a pressed flower in an examination paper, but she withstood his reproof. Subsequently the mathematics master wooed and won her as his bride. They were married in St. Thomas on December 22, 1886. She was nineteen; he was twenty-five.

During the winter of 1887-1888, Colonel Francis W. Parker, headmaster of the Francis W. Parker School in Chicago, went to St. Thomas to lecture. There he met the mathematics master. Not long afterward Colonel Parker was consulted in Chicago by a committee of citizens from the Village of Riverside, a suburb located on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad eleven miles southwest of the Chicago Loop. The delegation included members of the Riverside Board of Education, which then consisted of J. J. Bryant, Ellen Murray (Mrs. S.W. Murray), and Arthur Greenleaf. They asked Colonel Parker's advice and guidance in selecting a candidate to become superintendent of schools in Riverside. Recalling his visit to St. Thomas, Colonel Parker suggested Mr. Ames. As a result, interviews were arranged, Mr. Ames was offered the position, and he came with his family, which by then included his wife and their infant daughter, Caryl, to Riverside in the late summer of 1888, there to remain as superintendent until his death in 1931.

When he began his career in Riverside in 1888, pupils enrolled in grades one through eight numbered 153, and the faculty consisted of five teachers, including himself. All classes were housed in a three-story brick and frame building on Woodside Road. When he died in 1931 there were 1,239 pupils enrolled from kindergarten through grade eight, the faculty numbered 53, and classes were housed in four buildings.

Mr. Ames' philosophy of education was grounded on insistence on quality of instruction and high regard for a teacher's ability to "lead out" from each child the best performance of which the child was capable. As the system grew and more teachers were needed, he sought candidates at teacher-training institutions in the Chicago area -- at the University of Chicago College of Education, DeKalb Normal, Milwaukee-Downer, for example -- and he established such a rapport with the administrators of these institutions that they helped him arrange interviews with the cream of the crop. Because the citizens of Riverside taxed themselves to fund school budgets in reasonably ample manner, Mr. Ames was able to offer salaries then considered attractive. Once on the job, teachers in Riverside were given opportunities to participate in conferences on educational methodology, as well as opportunities for in-service training and other means of professional growth. I can attest to the character and competence of these teachers, from kindergarten through grade eight: The Misses Krum in kindergarten, and then Edna Ballou, Anne Benson (later Mrs. Walter Scoville), Edith Albright, Caroline Holmes, Otto Haack, Charlotte Green, and Lillian S. Jones. Even at age seventy, I recall them as superior teachers in whose classrooms I was privileged to study. I took them for granted, not understanding as a child the care with which they had been selected and assigned.

Among his peers in the profession of educational administration, Mr. Ames won a reputation as an innovator -- one willing to introduce new procedures and methods in whose soundness he believed. Long before it was widely adopted, for example, he introduced the "Gary Plan" into the Riverside system. This involved

a method of scheduling classes so that a grade, while having a "home room" teacher, would leave its home room for classes elsewhere in music, manual training, home economics, arts and crafts, for example. These were taught by teachers with special training and competence in such subjects. The variety reduced boredom in the classroom and made it possible to inspire interest and to recognize a child's special aptitudes and potential for accomplishment in a wide range of subject matter. Under his guidance the Riverside public school system was among the first in the Chicago area to provide kindergarten classes for four- and five-year-old children.

Mr. Ames emphasized health instruction long before this became a standard feature of the elementary curriculum. With the approval of the Riverside Board of Education he employed a full-time registered nurse to administer first aid, to help instill sound habits of personal cleanliness and sanitation, and to help parents understand and cooperate with programs for the immunization of their children from contagious disease. This innovation triggered a controversy in the community that brought on an acrimonious school board election campaign in 1916, in which some candidates for the Board of Education made an issue of the employment of the public school nurse. Mr. Ames was supported by the newly constituted board, and the nurse (Virginia Reese, R.N.) remained on the job. So far as I know, this was the only time during his years as superintendent that Mr. Ames' professional leadership was seriously challenged or his tenure as superintendent was in jeopardy.

By reading professional publications and through continuing contacts with fellow school administrators throughout the Chicago area, he kept abreast of the forward thrust of public education as the American institution entrusted with perpetuating our culture and enriching our heritage. Among other journals, he studied each issue of the Teachers College Record published at Columbia University. He respected the educational research work that introduced the use of intelligence tests, but he made no dogmatic pronouncements about their validity, regarding them rather as symbols and guides in evaluating the educational growth of an individual pupil.

He believed in encouraging children to "skip grades" if their learning readiness warranted their doing so, in order that the educational process could be accelerated. This accounts for the fact that several members of the Riverside-Brookfield High School Class of 1922, for example, received their diplomas at age 16.

In one of a series of articles on Riverside history published on May 7, 1970 in the Riverside Citizen, the Citizen's editor Herbert J. Bassman wrote:

> No other man has had as much influence on the youth of Riverside, North Riverside, and Hollywood as that wielded by Albert F. Ames. Although he died in 1931 his influence continues and is manifested in the educational traditions that prevail in the elementary schools of District 96.
>
> During the 43 years Albert F. Ames was superintendent of Riverside schools the system became recognized as having one of the most innovative and acceptable programs. During a period of changing trends in elementary school curricula the Riverside system as instituted by Superintendent Ames was looked to for example and leadership.
>
> This leadership was attained primarily because of the constant alertness of Mr. Ames to new philosophies and methods that were developed during the 1890's and the first decades of the 20th century. He chose from these newer methods those he considered practical for adoption by the Riverside system.
>
> His choices were recognized as sound and worth emulating. The Riverside system became a training center for teachers. Many attributed their successes after they left here to their experiences while with the Riverside system under the tutelage of Superintendent Ames.
>
> Delegations of visiting teachers from other schools and teacher colleges were frequent during the years of Mr. Ames' superintendency. His files were filled with letters expressing appreciation for visiting opportunities and benefits resulting from observing teaching methods....
>
> He was known in educational groups throughout the United States and had a wide and respected acquaintance among persons whose writings and influence are documented in the history of progressive education.
>
> He was one of the founders of the Cook County Superintendents' Round Table, and remained active in its attempts to establish cooperative mutual assistance to school districts throughout the county.
>
> In the 1920's, the last decade of his 43 years' reign as school head, Mr. Ames devoted much of his attention to school building programs. From 1897 to 1924 the classroom facilities were contained in one building. Construction of a five-grade school in the north section of Riverside was the first unit in building expansion. It was named A. F. Ames School in honor of the man who had contributed much toward elementary school education ideals everywhere as well as in District 96.
>
> Construction of Intermediate (now Hauser Junior high school) was another example of Mr. Ames' talent to be among the leaders in promoting new

> and improved concepts in education. It was an easy step for later administrators of Riverside schools to adopt the junior high school concept.
>
> The Ames and Intermediate schools arrangements and facilities still testify after 40 years to the foresight Mr. Ames had of modern school construction ideas. Flexibility of classroom space, so much a feature of present day school construction, was a feature in planning Ames and Intermediate schools....

Mr. Ames' special professional interest was the teaching of arithmetic. He was the joint author, with Dr. James Alexander McLellan, of five volumes on the subject. These were published by the Macmillan Company:

The Public School Arithmetic (1897) 364 pp.

Primary Arithmetic (1898) 53 pp.

*The Primary Public School Arithmetic (1898) 265 pp.

The Public School Mental Arithmetic (1899) 138 pp.

*The Public School Arithmetic for Grammar Grades (1902) 369 pp.

Dr. McLellan was a renowned Canadian educator and scholar. Born in Nova Scotia in 1832, he was 29 years older than Mr. Ames. Both were alumni of the University of Toronto. Presumably they met occasionally or corresponded during the six years (1882-1888) while Mr. Ames was the mathematics master at St. Thomas Collegiate Institute -- a period during which Dr. McLellan served as director of normal schools for Ontario and became (in 1885) principal of the Ontario Normal College in Hamilton. Dr. McLellan was co-author (with Dr. John Dewey) of The Psychology of Number, on which the McLellan-Ames textbooks were based.

In any event, the McLellan-Ames collaboration sprang from a mutual high regard of each for the other's scholarly competence and a keenly shared professional interest in developing and trying out new methods designed to improve pupil comprehension in the realm of mathematical pedagogy -- an area long dominated by rote teaching that frequently alienated a student. Rather, they used a pragmatic approach and sought to make the study of arithmetic one of satisfaction to the learner, rather than drudgery.

*See title pages reproduced on following page.

RIVERSIDE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A. F. AMES, A.B., SUPERINTENDENT

RIVERSIDE, ILL.

April 18 1898

President Geo. P. Brett.

Dear Sir:

This morning I am sending in registered envelope to The Macmillan Co. pages 1-93, 115 pages in all, containing Lessons 65-90 of The Primary Arithmetic.

The condition of things at present is as follows: Pages 1-135 and 1-881 have been returned & Linking Mss. ready for casting. What I am now sending will do so likely, require no important corrections and will in all probability be ready for casting after once or at most little proof reading. This will carry the book through about page 211. About 25 or 30 more printed pages will complete the book and early half of this is completed in Mss. There is every reason to think that the last of the Mss. can be forwarded by April 28 or 29. Unless I get the proof by the present-Mss before April 23, I hope that it will be convenient for the printers to let me have it between April 23-28 as my Spring vacation occurs then and I shall be away from home for a few days thereafter. Yours truly

A. F. Ames

This letter in A. F. Ames' handwriting is addressed to the president of the Macmillan Company. Reproduced by permission of the New York Public Library, it is part of the Ames file in the Macmillan Co. Records in the N Y P L's MSS & Archives Division.

THE PRIMARY

PUBLIC SCHOOL ARITHMETIC

BASED ON

McLELLAN AND DEWEY'S "PSYCHOLOGY OF NUMBER"

BY

J. A. McLELLAN, A.M., LL.D.

PRESIDENT ONTARIO NORMAL COLLEGE

AUTHOR (WITH DR. DEWEY) OF "THE PSYCHOLOGY OF NUMBER," "APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY," "ELEMENTS OF ALGEBRA," ETC.

AND

A. F. AMES, A.B.

HONOR GRADUATE IN MATHEMATICS; FORMERLY MATHEMATICAL MASTER, ST. THOMAS COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, RIVERSIDE, ILL.

TEACHERS' EDITION

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.

1898

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THE

PUBLIC SCHOOL ARITHMETIC

FOR GRAMMAR GRADES

BASED ON McLELLAN AND DEWEY'S

"PSYCHOLOGY OF NUMBER"

BY

J. A. McLELLAN, A.M., LL.D.

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AND

A. F. AMES, A.B.

HONOR GRADUATE IN MATHEMATICS, FORMERLY MATHEMATICAL MASTER ST. THOMAS COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE, ETC., SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, RIVERSIDE, ILL.

New York

THE MACMILLAN CO[illegible]ANY

LONDON: MACMILLAN & [illegible] LTD.

1902

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To the five McLellan-Ames volumes published by Macmillan, the aging Dr. McLellan lent his prestige and counsel; the younger Mr. Ames, in his middle and late thirties when the books were in preparation, actually wrote most of the contents.

The teaching methodology that these volumes introduced did indeed stir the student's interest and enhance the teacher's ability to make the subject matter of arithmetic what the authors called "an unrivalled means of mental discipline."

The prefaces to these volumes reveal a concern that the teaching of arithmetic should be child-centered. They give evidence of a malaise with what was considered a waste of time and talent caused by rote teaching. The preface to The Public School Arithmetic, for example, elaborates the philosophy to which Mr. Ames subscribed, as follows:

> It has been recently stated ... that boys enter college or training school at eighteen, after having spent from one-sixth to one-fourth of their entire school life studying mathematics.... This statement ... simply proves that the prevailing methods of teaching arithmetic are radically wrong. The serious defects in existing methods are mainly due to the fact that they take no account of the real nature of number, and of how the child's mind works in grasping the concepts of number and numerical relations....
>
> The one-sided theory that education is concerned only with fitting the child for existing civilization has made the so-called "practical" aims and methods dominant in school work. These methods are, and ever must be, essentially defective, inasmuch as they are founded on a half-truth; they take no account of the powers and capacities of the individual who is to be an effective instrument in maintaining and perfecting the civilization into which he is born....
>
> It is believed that, by direct teaching and helpful suggestion, these books will, in some degree, contribute to the growth of a rational, and therefore economical, method of training. At all events, the series differs from all other textbooks in being based on The Psychology of Number....
>
> From long and varied experience, both in teaching the subject and inspecting the teaching of others, it is firmly held that, compared with "written" arithmetic alone, mental arithmetic, if systematically taught, will produce twice the knowledge and twice the power in a given time....

Of the McLellan-Ames volume entitled The Public School Arithmetic published in 1897, Dr. John Dewey (then a member of the University of Chicago faculty) wrote:

> I am particularly struck with the clearness and conciseness of the method of treatment, the logical order of the selection of topics, and the exclusion of useless and irrelevant matter. The simplification of

> treatment, due to sticking close to fundamental principles, must recommend the book to teachers and pupils who have been bewildered by the great number of topics treated in the ordinary arithmetics -- topics which do not differ at all in their logical or arithmetical basis, but are simply different practical expressions of the same principle.

Earlier, Dr. Dewey had acknowledged an obligation to Mr. Ames for a concept described in an Essay by Dewey entitled "Remarks on the Psychology of Number" as follows:

> Many children in the same family are given to comparing the amount of food given to them, particularly when it is a dainty or a luxury. Comparisons of candy, cake, dessert, and the use of counting to find out who has the most, would, I think, be quite fruitful in showing the way in which the child spontaneously uses number. (This point was suggested to me by Superintendent Ames of Riverside.)

Dr. Dewey's comment causes me to recall that at the family dinner table, my father would count the size of the large brood gathered there, add my mother and himself, and say: "Now let's see. Tonight there are nine of us. That means that first I will cut the pie into three equal parts." This he did while each of us eagerly awaited his share of dessert. "And then, I will cut each third into three equal pieces. That way we will all share, and share alike." Even as paterfamilias he taught us arithmetic -- naturally, without any pedagogical claptrap.

Among contemporary reviews of the McLellan-Ames texts are the following that appeared in Education, a periodical published in Boston by Kasson and Palmer. In its issue of March 1899, Education's reviewer wrote (p. 447):

> Primary School Arithmetic, by J. A. McLellan and A. F. Ames, (Macmillan), is based on McLellan and Dewey's "Psychology of Number" and is made in response to the demands of teachers who studied this famous treatise on number work. This first book is an elaborate presentation of the subject and while it may at first disconcert the primary teacher by reason of the great amount of work presented, it will be found to be so full of sensible suggestions and sound philosophy as to be a necessary text and reference book for the teaching of number in the first three or four grades.

In its April 1899 issue, Education followed (p. 518) with this critical comment about another volume in the series:

> The Public School Mental Arithmetic by J. A. McLellan and A. F. Ames ... is unique in construction and method; those familiar with other books

> in this series will find this to be cast on lines that appeal to improved teaching and better methods. It is a book rational in purpose and execution, practical in every problem, accurately graded and free from puzzles. It is a book for growth and has merits not possessed by other mental arithmetic text-books.

In a study based on 52 different series of arithmetic texts used in the United States since 1880, Dr. Robert G. Clason makes this observation in a doctoral dissertation completed in 1968 at the University of Michigan:

> The McLellan-Ames texts give a new orientation to number, a more directly physical approach stressing the measurement of quantity. The texts are ... conventional in organization and in the recognition of generally stated definitions and principles as valid means of communicating number ideas. (p. 135).

Dr. Clason states further:

> ... the texts of McLellan and Ames ... were the initial impact of modern psychology in the number concepts of arithmetic texts.... (p. 146).

Another authority in the field of mathematics education is Dr. William G. Lowry of the University of Virginia. In correspondence with me, Dr. Lowry cited the following passage from Readings in the History of Mathematics Education, (1970) edited by James K. Bidwell and Robert G. Clason:

> [... The extract cited from a textbook by McLellan and Ames] illustrates the emphasis on measurement by the Dewey-McLellan approach to arithmetic. The appearance of definitions as the first order of business is also of interest, especially when compared with the corresponding first pages of Slocomb and Davies.... After 1900 the use of such definitions became less common. With the emergence of connectionistic psychology as a basis for arithmetic teaching, they disappeared almost entirely from the texts after 1920. (p. 163).

Then Dr. Lowry commented:

> It appears the impact of the work of Dewey and McLellan and their followers tended to be eclipsed by Thorndike's connectionistic theory during the early part of the 20th century. Many people today feel the acceptance of Thorndike's psychology and its influence on elementary school arithmetic during the first half of the 20th century was unfortunate.
>
> I suspect some of the teaching materials in elementary school mathematics developed over the past couple of decades are more in tune with the Dewey-McLellan psychology [on which the McLellan-Ames textbooks are based] than were the teaching materials of the years 1920 - 1950.

To clarify these comments further, Dr. Lowry added the following in a letter to me dated December 3, 1975:

> The Thorndike psychology tended to be a dominating influence in teaching and teaching materials of elementary mathematics from about 1920 to the 1950's. Some of the newer programs, from the late 1950's to the present time, to my way of thinking, are more in tune with the Dewey-McLellan psychology of teaching arithmetic than were the materials of the 1920 - 1950 era. In fact, the so-called "new math" at the elementary school level of the past fifteen years (1960 - 1975) had as one of its major aims to reverse some of the excesses of memorization and rote-style learning which, while not necessarily a major thesis of Thorndike himself, came to be applied in classroom practice by those who claimed allegiance to Thorndike's ideas.

It seems reasonable to conclude that although the McLellan-Ames textbooks were widely used for approximately two decades, and although they went into eclipse during the 1920's, some of the concepts on which they are based are emerging in new, influential form half a century later.

* * *

If my father had lived longer into this century he probably would have been unhappy about the so-called generation gap, the permissiveness of present-day society, and the erosion of respect for the family, church, school, and government as principal agencies of social control.

He could be a stern disciplinarian if occasion demanded that he assume that role. When I was a child he whipped me only once, so far as I can recall. But I deserved it -- for being sassy and impudent to a kindly neighbor. I was eight or nine. He punished me without her knowledge, but I was compelled to apologize to her, and I was made to understand -- as my sisters and brothers all were made to understand -- that an Ames had to build for himself and maintain for his family a record of decent behavior and courteous conduct.

Our church affiliation was central in family activities at the Ames household. In his youth my father was a Methodist. My mother had been a Baptist. When they reached Riverside in 1888 they found neither a Methodist nor a Baptist church, but they found a church home in the Presbyterian denomination. Soon they identified themselves and their children with the congregation located along the spacious common near the Swan Pond. Besides teaching a Sunday School class of teen-age boys my mother started a young people's group called "The Round Table." This met

each Sunday evening at the Presbyterian Church. Its heyday was during the period when the Reverend Alfred F. Waldo was the Presbyterian pastor.

Almost invariably a brief family prayer service followed the evening meal in our home. My mother sang a hymn, recited a Psalm, and called on each of us to say a Bible verse. More than once, the response would be: "Jesus wept."

"You can do better than that," she would comment.

"Shortest verse in the Bible," was the brazen rejoinder that usually softened her displeasure.

Then my father would extemporize a brief prayer, full of "We beseech Thees." Irreverently his offspring occasionally kept track of the number of "beseechments" that prefaced his pleas to the Almighty. The count often exceeded a dozen.

For this prayer we all knelt, with our heads bowed over the seats of the chairs on which we had been sitting during dinner. The seats were upholstered in leather. To this day family prayer is associated in my memory with the not unpleasant smell of warm leather, recently sat upon.

My father usually attended Sunday morning services at eleven o'clock. These were held following Sunday School, which began at 9:30. Because of her Sunday School class, Nelson Willard, also a Sunday School teacher and a pillar of the church, would call for my mother in his Stearns-Knight about 9:15 each Sunday morning to drive her the mile and a half from our home at 315 North Long Common Road. I tagged along, eager to ride in one of the first automobiles in Riverside.

Just before we left, my father would say: "Daisy, you take Edward and go. I'll be along later. Meanwhile I'm going to write the family letter."

It was a Sunday morning ritual that began about 1910 when my oldest sister Caryl was married and left home. On the dining room table he would stack a pile of "onion skin" tissue paper, with carbon paper between each sheet, and write two or three pages recounting family events and neighborhood news of the preceding week. Always he signed it: "Your affectionate father A. F. Ames." Next day a copy would be mailed to any of my four sisters or two brothers who had left home --

away at school, teaching, or married. This came to be called the "Round Robin." After my father's death my mother kept it up until she died in 1951. Since then, somewhat altered in form, the Round Robin still carries news of the family to the surviving Ames sons and daughters and their children.

My father did not get involved in Sunday School classes or "Round Table" programs. I suspect he thought he deserved surcease on the week end from activities aimed at governing the conduct of children and teen-agers after close association with them at school Monday through Friday.

Occasionally he attended Wednesday evening prayer meeting -- partly for the exercise, partly for the fellowship. It was a long walk to church, and he never owned or drove an automobile. Eventually, however, he quit going to prayer meeting because -- as he used to explain -- the last time he attended he found in his suit coat pocket a restaurant check for a meal at Marshall Field's. Apparently he had pocketed the check and absent-mindedly walked out of Field's without paying it. He decided that was the Almighty's way of telling him to pay a debt he had overlooked. But he decided not to go back to prayer meeting again lest it become an occasion during which his sins of omission were to be revealed to him. He paid the bill the next time he went to Chicago's Loop.

My father never enjoyed robust health. He was subject to frequent colds and other respiratory disturbances. He died of pneumonia only a few years before the wonder drugs were available to reduce the fatality rate of that fearsome disease. Probably he suffered from allergies that could have been alleviated by diagnostic practices and treatment procedures developed since his time. I never heard him complain about health problems, however. Nor did I ever hear him swear. He never smoked or drank.

Throughout his adult life my father was tall and thin. As he aged, he was wont to joke with my sister Florence about his inability to "put on a bay window." I am sure he wore the same size suit from the time he was in his twenties until he was 70. Except for walking, he did not engage in physical exercise. His skin

was sensitive to direct sunlight, and to ward off the possibility of a sunstroke he often carried an umbrella on a bright summer day. In his fifties he suffered from a painful attack of sciatica. For several months he rode back and forth from our home on North Long Common to the Central School -- usually a brisk fifteen-minute walk each way -- in Jake Opper's horse-drawn cab and hobbled to and from his office with a cane. But that disability passed, and at my mother's insistence he would go see Dr. Heywood or, later, Dr. Fuller to get a prescription for a "tonic" to restore his appetite and strength. In his youth he wore a beard. He shed the beard by the start of World War I. He kept a mustache for a while, and then -- by the 1920's -- was clean shaven, as he remained for the rest of his life.

His inability to put on weight was not from lack of nutritious food, for my mother was a good cook, as were my sisters. The family meals were varied and well balanced in a day when good fare consisted of meat and potatoes, home made bread, green salad in season, garden vegetables, and stewed fruit and jellies that my mother put up at canning time.

My father lived on his salary, built a house in 1912 after paying rent for 24 years to occupy homes on Lawton and on Gage Road. He paid off the mortgage on the North Long Common residence in 1925, by which time his annual salary had reached the magic figure of $6,000. That home was the major asset of his estate. His principal legacy was a large portion of integrity, which he bequeathed to a family grateful for the esteem he had earned and for the respect in which he was held by the community he served.

Probably one only time in his life that my father felt flush was when he received royalty checks from Macmillan. Shortly after such a check had come in 1902, he was on a teacher-scouting trip to Milwaukee. On impulse he telegraphed my mother that if she would come to Milwaukee he would buy her a piano. When he returned to his hotel, the desk clerk informed him that his wife had arrived.

"Who?" he asked.

"Mrs. Ames," the clerk replied, "and what's more she has two children with

her." They were the youngest at that time -- my sister Harriet, then eight, and my brother William, then six. He fulfilled his promise and bought from Lyon & Healy in Chicago for $513 an upright ebony Steinway, on which the younger Ames children practiced piano lessons. Unfortunately none of them was endowed with sufficient musical talent to make adequate use of that wonderful instrument.

In their middle age, a pleasant interlude for my mother and father was a trip to Europe during the summer of 1912. They made the "grand tour" of the continent and the British Isles, returning with black-and-white photographs galore, and picture postcards of palaces and museums and gardens they had visited. For months we were entertained by my mother's account of their trip. It was like a non-stop Burton Holmes travelogue. Funds for the journey were generously provided by a prominent Riverside citizen who believed the superintendent of schools and his wife would enjoy and profit from exposure to Old World scenes and foreign cultures.

While they were abroad, my mother reported, fellow tourists were forever asking if perchance my father were a physician from Kokomo or an attorney from Albuquerque, a business executive from Des Moines, or a pharmacist from Rochester. "Such a striking resemblance," they would exclaim. My father would comment wryly that those for whom he was mistaken must be very distinguished looking. "Not at all," my mother would insist. "It just means you're a common type." When they were in Italy traveling acquaintances commented that my father's gaunt profile strikingly resembled that of the poet Dante. He would remind her of this when my mother trotted out the "common type" comment.

A. F. Ames loved to read, mostly history, biography, and other non-fiction. Most of his leisure reading he did during vacations of six to eight weeks while we camped in tents pitched along the shore of Lake Mona, near Muskegon, Michigan. The books were borrowed from Muskegon's Hackley Public Library. Occasionally he enjoyed playing cards -- whist or auction bridge. But never on Sunday. At the Ames home we were supposed to think high thoughts and behave like Puritans on the Lord's Holy Day.

He was not an authoritarian teacher or administrator. He was a compassionate man who loved his work, cherished his family, and found a sense of achievement in the development and maturing of those who had been under his tutelage as children. Among the most rewarding experiences of his career were those occasions -- usually after graduation exercises -- when the immigrant parents of a graduate, in broken or hesitant English, would seek him out to thank him for enabling their son or daughter to acquire a basic education that would help them fulfill the promise of America.

Because of the ethnic makeup of the population of Riverside, only a few immigrant parents resided in the Village during the years my father was superintendent. But Albert F. Ames and Daisy Carder Ames, who brought up four daughters and three sons in Riverside, were themselves immigrants. As soon as they could qualify they became U. S. citizens. Although my father never called himself a Canadian-American (nor would he align himself with those who did so, having an antipathy for "hyphenated" Americanism), he had a special empathy for the expatriated old-world citizens who had left their native lands to seek opportunity for themselves and their children in the new world.

* * *

One day early in 1924 a delivery man went to the superintendent's office in the Central School in Riverside. Mr. Ames was at his desk.

"Sir," the man said, "could you help me out? I've got a load of bricks and an order to deliver them to the A. F. Ames School, and I don't know where it is."

Mr. Ames' jaw dropped. Then he recovered his poise. "Oh," he said, "that would be at 86 Southcote Road -- Southcote and Nuttall -- in Riverside."

"Thanks," said the trucker. "Funny they didn't put the address on the slip."

And that is how my father learned that the Riverside Board of Education had decided to name the new school for him. It was a recognition that he and his children and his children's children treasured ever afterward.

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About the Author of This Memoir

Edward C. Ames is the youngest of the seven Ames children. He was born in Riverside in 1906. He is a graduate of the University of Chicago (Ph.B. cum laude, 1926), where he earned membership in Phi Beta Kappa, and of Harvard University (A. M., 1928). He taught at Ohio Wesleyan University (1927 - 1929) and at the University of Toledo (1934 - 1938). He is co-author of English in Business and Engineering, a college textbook published in 1936 by Prentice-Hall.

Mr. Ames was a reporter, editorial writer, and feature writer on the staff of The Toledo Times (1930 - 1935) and moonlighted as a radio newscaster on Toledo's Station WSPD (1935 - 1940). He won the "Toledo Outstanding Young Man" Award in 1939. He launched and managed Toledo's Blue Cross Plan from 1938 to 1940. Then for thirty years he served successively as the principal public relations executive of three industrial firms: Owens-Corning Fiberglas Corporation (1940 - 1953), Calumet & Hecla, Inc. (1953 - 1954), and Owens-Illinois, Inc. (1954 - 1971).

He is a past president of the Rotary Club of Toledo. The voters of Lucas County, of which Toledo is the seat, have elected him to public office six times: twice (1945 and 1949) as a member of the Toledo Board of Education on which he served for eight years and of which he was president in 1947 and 1950, and four times (1957, 1959, 1965, and 1967) to the State Board of Education of Ohio on which he served for fifteen years and of which he was president during the 1968 - 1969 biennium.

In 1969 he received the Ohio Governor's Award. He is the recipient of honorary doctor's degrees from Salem (W. Va.) College (Hum.D., 1961) and the University of Toledo (LL.D., 1973). He retired from Owens-Illinois in 1971, at which time he was a vice president of O-I's Administrative Division. While active as an industrial public relations executive prior to his retirement he served on the Education Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States and was chairman (1967 - 1968) of the National Industrial Conference Board's Council on Corporate Contributions.

For many years Mr. Ames has been an Episcopal layreader licensed by the Bishop of Ohio. He is a former vestryman of Saint Michael's in the Hills Episcopal Church in Toledo. By appointment of the State Board of Education of Ohio he is a member of the Ohio Advisory Council for Vocational Education.

Except for two years (1953 - 1954) he has lived in Toledo since 1929. He is married to the former Mary Helen Cornwall of Salem, Ohio, whom he met while she was an undergraduate and he was a faculty freshman at Ohio Wesleyan University. They have two sons (Daniel and Geoffrey), a daughter Stephanie (Mrs. Cornelius A. Manly, Jr.), and five grandsons.